

I CLAIM:

1. A method for redeeming discount offers comprising:

providing a circulation medium and providing said medium with indicia which includes a machine readable identification code;

causing said medium to be distributed to potential users;

associating said identification code with data identifying items which are to be offered at a discount provided as part of said medium and storing said data in memory in a data base so as to be addressable by said identification code;

providing means for reading said identification code provided with said circulation medium;

providing means associated with said code reading means for tabulating sales of items so that any discount corresponding to an item listed in said data is deducted from the price of the item in the tabulation; and

using said reading means to identify said code provided with said medium and using said means for tabulating items to obtain a price for the involved item and to cause a discount to be debited against the purchased item if the involved item is listed as part of said data identifying an item as qualifying for a discount as called for by the data base data defined by the identification code of the medium.

Claim 2

A method as defined in claim 1 further characterized by providing said circulation medium as an offer brochure and providing said machine readable identification code on said brochure so that the code identifies the brochure title and references those items identified in the data base which are offered as discounted products.

Claim 3

A method as defined in claim 2 further characterized by the step of providing means for tabulating sales of items including using said reading means to scan product codes on the items purchased to identify the purchased item and cause the price of the item to be entered into the tabulation.

Claim 4

A method as defined in claim 2 further characterized by the step of using a key pad entry means to manually input the purchased item into the tabulating means.

Claim 5

A method as defined in claim 3 further characterized by providing said read only memory with address locations corresponding respectively to different discount offers.

Claim 6

A method as defined in claim 5 further characterized in that in each of said memory address locations is located a date identifying the expiration of offers on products for which a discount is offered.

Claim 7

A method as defined in claim 6 further characterized each of said items in at least one of said memory locations has an expiration date associated with it.

Claim 8

A method as defined in claim 7 further characterized by said data including an expiration date for each item offer listed in each of said memory address locations.

Claim 9

A method as defined in claim 3 further characterizes by said controller being provided with an account memory within which discounts which have been debited against purchased items identified in said data are stored.

Claim 10

A method as defined in claim 8 further characterized by providing said controller with an interface means for connecting said account memory with a remote redemption facility.

Claim 11

A method as defined in claim 10 further characterized by using said interface means to transfer debit amounts stored in said account memory to the appropriate manufacturer or financial institution or designated intermediary company or entity associated with each discount which is offered.

Claim 12

A method as defined in claim 1 further characterized by providing as part of said identification code identification indicia means on said medium for identifying the addressee of said medium;

using said code reading means to read the identification indicia means and to create a data file identified by the information in said identification indicia means; and

using said means for tabulating items to record at least the items caused to be given a discount in said data file identified by the identification indicia means of the user.

Claim 13

A method as defined in claim 12 further characterized by said identification indicia means being a standardized bar code identifying at least the address of the holder of the medium.

Claim 14

A method as defined in claim 12 further characterized by said identification indicia means being a POSTNET bar code identifying at least the address of the holder of the medium.

Claim 15

A method as defined in claim 12 further characterized by using each data file identified by said identification indicia means as a means to study buying habits of the recipient of the medium.

Claim 16

A system for redeeming discount offers comprising:

a circulation medium;

said medium having indicia which includes a machine readable identification code;

means for distributing said medium to potential users;

said identification code being associated with data identifying items which are to be offered at a discount provided as part of said medium;

memory means for storing said data in memory in a database so as to be addressable by said identification code;

a

means for reading said identification code ~~provided~~ with said circulation medium;

means associated with said code reading means for tabulating sales of items so that any discount corresponding to an item listed by said data in said memory means is deducted from the price of the item in the tabulation; and

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said reading means identifying said code printed on said medium and said means for tabulating items being used to determine a price for the involved item and to then cause a discount to be debited against the purchased item if the involved item is listed as part of said data identifying an item as qualifying for a discount as called for by discounts defined by the identification code of a circulation medium.

Subt B

Claim 17

A method ~~of~~ tracking customer purchasing habits comprising:

a providing a circulation medium and providing said medium ~~with~~ ^{including} indicia ~~with~~ a machine readable identification code means;

causing said medium to be distributed to potential users;

associating said identification code means with the addressee of the distributed circulation medium;

providing means for reading said identification code means provided with said circulation medium;

using a code reading means to read the identification code means and to create a data file identified by the information in said identification code means; and

providing means for tabulating items and for recording the items purchased by the bearer of the circulation medium and storing the recorded information in said data file identified by the identification code means of the circulation medium.

Claim 18

A method as defined in claim 17 further characterized by providing said identification code means as indicia which identifies the address of the recipient.

Claim 19

A method as defined in claim 17 further characterized by providing said identification code means as indicia which identifies the name of the recipient.

Claim 20

A method as defined in claim 17 further characterized by providing said identification code means as indicia which identifies the name and address of the recipient.